

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
8th November 2017

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities

NASACRE Update

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To present members of SACRE with a brief update on key issues that have developed or arisen since the last meeting of SACRE.

2 Summary

2.1 Members of SACRE will receive a brief report on a number of key issues. These are matters on which it is appropriate to brief members of SACRE.

3 Recommendation

3.1 That members of SACRE receive the report and note the contents

4 Background

4.1 NASACRE is the national body of SACRE's. National meetings are held to which members of SACRE are invited and encouraged to attend. Issues are discussed which have local or national importance for RE.

4.2 Members will be briefed on any key developments including:

- Annual subscription increase
- The 'State of the Nation' report and
- CoRE Interim report's recommendations and implications
- Joint NASACRE/AREIAC conference

5 Equal Opportunities

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

6 Financial implications

6.1 Financial implications may be raised by individual items. These have been dealt with elsewhere, or will be raised at future meetings of SACRE.

Contact Officer
Telephone number:

Emma Jardine-Phillips
07805 692573

Annual Subscription increase early warning

Please note that NASACRE's Executive Committee will bring the following resolution to our AGM in May 2018:

That the Annual Subscription to NASACRE should be raised from £95 per year to £105 per year with immediate effect (i.e. for the academic year 2018-19 and onwards).

This is a very modest increase, given that it is the first increase for perhaps ten years or more. The Executive Committee believes that the increase is justified because of increases in the costs of its core activities over the years, including administrative support, travel and subsistence, consultancy fees, and membership of/partnership with other (related) bodies, including the costs of representing NASACRE on these bodies and/or participating in their programmes. The true cost would be a great deal higher were NASACRE not sustained by the voluntary contributions of time, energy and expertise generously given by its officers and committee members! So the Annual Subscription is great value for money, and we should not be shy of saying this.

Procedurally, the mechanisms for dealing with this motion will be circulated with the communications and papers for the AGM itself. However, SACREs might well discuss and vote on the above resolution in advance of the AGM. It is anticipated that ways will be found for SACREs to record their vote, for or against the resolution, whether they attend the AGM or not. In order to keep the procedure as clear and simple as possible, no amendments to the resolution will be taken, either before or during the AGM.

Rev. Prebendary Michael Metcalf, Treasurer

The Consultation on Interim Report

The Commission on Religious Education has launched a consultation on the interim report, Religious Education For All (attached) which will be open until 9.00am on 4th December. It is important that the Commission hear from as wide a range of people and organisations as possible; people are encouraged to consider responding either in a personal capacity or on behalf of an organisation, or both.

The call for evidence is available by following this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CoREConsult1>

Questions about the call for evidence, or about the Commission on Religious Education, may be directed to enquiries@commissiononre.org.uk.

In order to debate the content, and hopefully influence the final report, NASACRE are once again holding a joint conference with AREIAC at the Ibis Hotel, Birmingham on 24th November 2017.

The conference will seek answers to many vital questions regarding the **Commission on RE: The Interim Report** including what its recommendations might mean for pupils, teachers, advisers & SACREs.

The Conference provides space to consider:

- What are the key issues the CoRE Interim Report identifies?
- What does the Report say about the evidence that has been presented so far?
- Does the Report comment on the nature or quality of the evidence that the Commission has received?
- Is the Commission still looking for additional evidence?

- In the light of the Interim Report what questions would you wish to put to the Commission? This conference will be of great interest to all SACRE members, RE advisers, RE teachers and anyone interested in the future of RE.

Cost:

AREIAC members and members of a SACRE subscribed to NASACRE: £75.00

Non-members: £90.00.

Refreshments and lunch will be provided.

The State of the Nation Report

The Religious Education Council and the National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) have created a new State of the Nation report on Religious Education provision within secondary schools in England. The report includes data from the School Workforce Census and GCSE figures, as well as survey responses from 790 secondary schools. This project is running parallel to, but independent of, the continuing work of the Commission on Religious Education. However, any project findings will enrich the context of the Commission's work and will feed into its own recommendations aimed at sustaining or improving the secondary school RE offer.

The research found that:

- 25% of all schools surveyed said a weekly RE lesson to ensure pupils understand different religions and beliefs is not available. In academies and free schools, where RE is determined as part of the funding agreement, this figure rose to 34% for 11 to 13 year olds, and 44% for 14 to 16 year olds. Four per cent of schools with a religious character do not offer a weekly lesson.
- RE also receives the lowest level of teaching time in academies and free schools. A majority (56%) dedicate less than 3% of their timetables (around 40 minutes) to RE; this low level of RE is only found in a third of schools where a locally agreed syllabus applies and 10% of schools with a religious character.
- Despite Religious Studies GCSE remaining a popular choice among students, it is still allocated less than the recommended level of teaching time of two hours per week in many schools; 43% of pupils are taught their GCSE full course in under one hour a week, nearly half (48%) receive one hour and a half or less of teaching.
- Students are more likely to have a teacher trained with the appropriate level of subject knowledge and expertise who can create a space to discuss faiths and beliefs in a school with a religious character (90%) than in schools where RE is determined with the locally agreed syllabus (73%), or academies and free schools where RE is determined as part of their funding agreement (66%).

Both strands of work are being undertaken at a critical time for religious education, in particular because of the Government's ongoing programme of educational reform and drive towards full academisation.